Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended):   A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

receiving, via a gaming device, a wager for initiating a game play of a game, wherein the game play comprises a predetermined number of rounds of the game and the wager is an amount sufficient to pre-pay for the predetermined number of rounds;

in response to the wager, establishing, via the gaming device, in response to the wager, an initial balance of winnings which can be won by a player for said game play via the gaming device, wherein the initial balance of winnings is greater than the amount of the wager;

prior to displaying any outcome for any of said predetermined number of rounds, displaying the initial balance of winnings which can by won by the player for said game play;

determining, via the gaming device, a predetermined number of outcomes, the predetermined number of outcomes comprising at least one respective outcome for each of the predetermined number of rounds;

displaying the determined outcome for each of the predetermined number of rounds;

adjusting, via the gaming device, the initial balance of winnings for said game play based on at least one of the determined outcomes, thereby determining a current balance of winnings, wherein at least one of the outcomes causes the current balance of winnings to be less than the initial balance of winnings;

when a predetermined subset of the predetermined number of rounds is complete:

(i)   determining, via the gaming device after a predetermined subset of the predetermined number of rounds has been concluded, a final balance of

winnings based on the current balance of winnings ~~at the time after the predetermined subset of the predetermined number of rounds~~; and

(ii)   providing, ~~via the gaming device,~~ the <u>determined</u> final balance of winnings to ~~a~~ <u>the</u> player ~~who initiated the game play~~.

Claim 2 (currently amended):   The method of claim 1, wherein the player is unable to cash out the current balance of winnings until after the predetermined number of rounds ~~has been concluded~~ <u>is complete</u>.

Claim 3 (original):   The method of claim 1, wherein providing the final balance of winnings comprises:

adding the final balance of winnings to a credit meter balance of the gaming device.

Claim 4 (original):   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

establishing, based on the wager, a credit meter balance that is distinct from the initial balance of winnings.

Claim 5 (original):   The method of claim 1, wherein the initial balance of winnings is established prior to any outcome being determined.

Claim 6 (currently amended):   The method of claim 1, wherein adjusting the initial balance of winnings comprises:

determining ~~an~~ <u>one of said</u> ~~outcome~~ <u>outcomes</u> of the predetermined number of outcomes;

determining an effect on the game play corresponding to the <u>determined one of</u> the ~~outcome~~ <u>outcomes</u>; ~~or~~ <u>and</u>

applying the <u>determined</u> effect to the game play.

Claim 7 (currently amended):   The method of claim 6, wherein ~~an~~ <u>the</u> effect on the game play comprises an effect on a current balance of winnings that corresponds to the

outcome, and wherein applying the effect to the game play comprises applying the effect to the current balance of winnings.

Claim 8 (original):   The method of claim 6, further comprising:

accessing a database that stores a plurality of obtainable outcomes, each of the obtainable outcomes corresponding to a respective effect on the game play.

Claim 9 (currently amended):   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

automatically initiating each round of the predetermined number of rounds, without ~~further~~ requiring an input to do so from the player.

Claim 10 (currently amended):   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

initiating each round of the predetermined number of rounds ~~based on~~ in response to a command to do so from the player.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the outcomes of the predetermined number of outcomes comprises an outcome that grants a privilege to the player.

Claim 12 (currently amended):   The method of claim 11, wherein the privilege comprises at least one of:

permission to avoid an effect of ~~an~~ at least one of the ~~outcome of the~~ determined outcomes;

a reduction in the predetermined number of rounds; ~~or~~ and

an increase in the final balance of winnings.

Claim 13 (currently amended):   The method of claim 11, further comprising:
applying the privilege to the game play at ~~the~~ a time the privilege is obtained.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 11, further comprising:

applying the privilege to the game play in response to a command from the player to do so.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The method of claim 11, wherein the privilege ~~has associated therewith~~ is associated with at least one constraint.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The method of claim 15, wherein the at least one constraint comprises at least one of:

a predetermined number of rounds~~,~~ from ~~a~~ the round ~~within~~ in which the privilege is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied;

a predetermined number of game plays~~,~~ from a game play ~~within~~ in which the privilege is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied; ~~or~~ and

a predetermined period of time~~,~~ from a time at which the privilege ~~was~~ is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The method of claim 11, further comprising:

storing an indication of the privilege with an identifier of the player~~,~~ for future use of said privilege by the player.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein adjusting the initial balance of winnings comprises:

determining, based on at least one of the determined outcomes, that adjusting the initial balance of winnings would result in a negative balance of winnings; and

setting the current balance of winnings to be zero.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein adjusting the initial balance of winnings comprises:

adjusting the initial balance of winnings such that the current balance of winnings is a fractional amount.

Claim 20 (currently amended):   A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

receiving, via a gaming device, a wager for initiating a game play of a game, wherein the game play comprises a predetermined amount of time during which consecutive rounds of the game are to be played;

establishing, via the gaming device, in response to the wager, an initial balance of winnings which can by won by a player for said game play, wherein the initial balance of winnings is greater than the amount of the wager;

prior to displaying any outcome for any round of the game of said game play, displaying the initial balance of winnings which can by won by the player for said game play;

determining, via the gaming device, a number of outcomes during the predetermined amount of time, each of the outcomes corresponding to a respective round of the game;

displaying the determined outcome for each of said number of outcomes;

adjusting, via the gaming device, the initial balance of winnings based on at least one of the determined outcomes, thereby determining a current balance of winnings, wherein at least one of the outcomes causes the current balance of winnings to be less than the initial balance of winnings;

when a predetermined subset of the predetermined amount of time has elapsed:

(i)   determining, via the gaming device at the end of a predetermined subset of the predetermined amount of time, a final balance of winnings based on the current balance of winnings at the time after end of the predetermined subset of the predetermined amount of time; and

(ii)   providing, via the gaming device, the determined final balance of winnings to a the player who initiated the game play.

Claim 21(original):   The method of claim 20, wherein the game play further comprises a minimum rate of play for the predetermined amount of time, such that the player must initiate rounds of the game at the minimum rate of play in order to qualify for the final balance of winnings.

Claim 22 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein the player is unable to cash out the final balance of winnings until after the predetermined amount of time ends.

Claim 23 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein providing the final balance of winnings comprises:

adding the final balance of winnings to a credit meter balance of the gaming device.

Claim 24 (original): The method of claim 20, further comprising:

establishing, based on the wager, a credit meter balance that is distinct from the initial balance of winnings.

Claim 25 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein the initial balance of winnings is established prior to any outcome being determined.

Claim 26 (currently amended): The method of claim 20, wherein adjusting the initial balance of winnings comprises:

determining ~~an~~one of the ~~outcome~~ outcomes of the number of outcomes;

determining an effect on the game play corresponding to ~~the~~said determined one of the outcomes~~outcome~~; ~~or~~and

applying the determined effect to the game play.

Claim 27 (currently amended): The method of claim 26, wherein ~~an~~ the effect on the game play comprises an effect on a current balance of winnings that corresponds to the outcome, and wherein applying the effect to the game play comprises applying the effect to the current balance of winnings.

Claim 28 (original): The method of claim 26, further comprising:

accessing a database that stores a plurality of obtainable outcomes, each of the obtainable outcomes corresponding to a respective effect on the game play.

Claim 29 (original): The method of claim 20, further comprising:

automatically initiating, during the predetermined amount of time, rounds of the game at a predetermined rate.

Claim 30 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein determining a number of outcomes comprises:

receiving, from the player, a command to initiate a round of the game; and

determining an outcome in response to the command.

Claim 31 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein at least one of the determined outcomes comprises an outcome that grants a privilege to the player.

Claim 32 (currently amended): The method of claim 31, wherein the privilege comprises at least one of:

permission to avoid an effect of ~~an~~ at least one of ~~outcome of~~ the determined outcomes;

a reduction in the predetermined amount of time; ~~or~~and

an increase in the final balance of winnings.

Claim 33 (currently amended): The method of claim 31, further comprising:

applying the privilege to the game play at ~~the~~a time the privilege is obtained.

Claim 34 (original): The method of claim 31, further comprising:

applying the privilege to the game play in response to a command from the player to do so.

Claim 35 (currently amended): The method of claim 31, wherein the privilege ~~has associated therewith~~ is associated with at least one constraint.

Claim 36 (currently amended): The method of claim 35, wherein the at least one constraint comprises at least one of:

a predetermined number of rounds, from a round ~~within~~ in which the privilege is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied;

a predetermined number of game plays, from a game play ~~within~~ in which the privilege is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied; ~~or~~and

a predetermined period of time, from a time at which the privilege ~~was~~is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied.

Claim 37 (currently amended): The method of claim 31, further comprising:

storing an indication of the privilege with an identifier of the player, for future use of said privilege by the player.

Claim 38 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein adjusting the initial balance of winnings comprises:

determining, based on at least one of the determined outcomes, that adjusting the initial balance of winnings would result in a negative balance of winnings; and

setting the current balance of winnings to be zero.

Claim 39 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein adjusting the initial balance of winnings comprises:

adjusting the initial balance of winnings such that the current balance of winnings is a fractional amount.

Claim 40 (currently amended):   A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

establishing, via the gaming device, at the initiation of a game play at a gaming device, an initial value of a prize which can be won by a player for said game play, via the gaming device, wherein the game play ends once at least one of a predetermined number of rounds of the game are completed and a predetermined amount of time has passed;

prior to displaying any outcome for said game play, displaying the initial value of the prize which can be won by the player for said game play;

determining, via the gaming device, a series of outcomes for the game play, each respective outcome of said series of outcomes corresponding to a round of the game play;

displaying said determined outcomes of the series of outcomes;

adjusting, via the gaming device, the initial value of the prize based on the determined outcomes, thereby determining a current value of the prize, wherein at least one of the determined outcomes causes the current value of the prize to be less than the initial value of the prize;

once the game play ends, determining, via the gaming device, once the game play ends, a final value of the prize; and

outputting the prize of the final value to a the player.

Claim 41 (currently amended):   The method of claim 40, wherein the prize comprises at least one of:

currency;

alternate currency;

a product; or and

a service.

Claim 42 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

establishing, via a gaming device, an initial value of a prize which can be won by a player, said initial value of the prize being that is distinct from a balance of credits available to a the player for wagering on a game at the gaming device;

prior to displaying any outcome for any wagered on play of said game, displaying the initial value of the prize to the player;

determining, via the gaming device, a series of outcomes;

displaying said determined outcomes of the series of outcomes;

after each of the outcomes of the series of outcomes is displayed, adjusting determining, via the gaming device, the initial value a current value of the prize, based on an effect associated with the said displayed outcome, wherein at least one of the outcomes of the series of outcomes causes the final current value of the prize to be less than the initial value of the prize;

determining, via the gaming device, that the current value of the prize is zero;

determining, via the gaming device, a number of outcomes that were determined displayed before the current value of the prize reached zero; and

providing, via the gaming device, a reward to the player based on the number of outcomes.

Claim 43 (currently amended):   A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

(a)   receiving, via a gaming device, a wager for initiating a game play of a game, wherein the game play comprises a predetermined number of rounds of the game and the wager is an amount sufficient to pre-pay for the predetermined number of rounds;

(b)   in response to the wager and prior to any outcome being determined for said game play:

(i)   establishing, via the gaming device, and in response to the wager and prior to any outcome being determined, an initial balance of winnings which can be won by a player for said game play, wherein the initial balance of winnings is greater than the amount of the wager; and

(ii)   causing a display of said initial balance of winnings;

(c)   establishing, via the gaming device, and based on the wager, a credit meter balance, said credit meter balance being that is distinct from the initial balance of winnings for said game play;

(d)   determining, via the gaming device, a predetermined number of outcomes, the predetermined number of outcomes comprising at least one respective outcome for each of the predetermined number of rounds;

wherein at least one of the outcomes of the predetermined number of outcomes comprises an outcome that grants a privilege to the player; wherein the, said privilege comprises comprising at least one of:

(i)   permission to avoid an effect of an outcome of the at least one of said determined outcomes;

(ii)   a reduction in the predetermined number of rounds; and

(iii)   an increase in the a final balance of winnings;

wherein the privilege is applied to the game play at the a time the privilege is obtained and in response to a command from the player to do so;

wherein the privilege has associated therewith is associated with at least one constraint; wherein the, said at least one constraint comprises comprising at least one of:

(i)   a predetermined number of rounds, from a round ~~within~~ in which the privilege is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied;

(ii)   a predetermined number of game plays, from a game play ~~within~~ in which the privilege is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied; or

(iii)   a predetermined period of time, from a time at which the privilege ~~was~~ is obtained, within which the privilege must be applied;

(e)   storing, via the gaming device, an indication of ~~the~~ any privilege granted to the player with an identifier of the player, for future use by the player;

(f)   determining, via the gaming device and based on a command received from the player, whether to automatically initiate each round of the predetermined rounds, without further input to do so from the player;

(g)   adjusting, via the gaming device, the initial balance of winnings based on at least one of the determined outcomes, thereby determining a current balance of winnings, wherein at least one of the outcomes causes the current balance of winnings to be less than the initial balance of winnings;

wherein adjusting the initial balance of winnings based on at least one of the determined outcomes comprises:

(i)   accessing a database that stores a plurality of obtainable outcomes, each of the obtainable outcomes corresponding to a respective effect on the game play;

~~determining an outcome of the predetermined number of outcomes;~~

(ii)   determining an effect on the game play corresponding to ~~the~~ said at least one of the determined ~~outcome~~ outcomes; and

(iii)   applying the determined effect to the game play; ~~and~~

~~adjusting the initial balance of winnings such that the current balance of winnings is a fractional amount;~~

(h)   determining, via the gaming device and after the predetermined number of rounds ~~has been concluded~~ is complete, ~~a~~ the final balance of winnings; and

(i)   providing, via the gaming device, the final balance of winnings to ~~a player who initiated the game play~~ the player;

wherein the player is unable to cash out ~~the current~~ the final balance of winnings until ~~after~~ the predetermined number of rounds ~~has been concluded~~ is complete; and

wherein providing the final balance of winnings comprises adding the final balance of winnings to ~~a~~ the credit meter balance of the gaming device.

Claim 44 (currently amended):   A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

(a)   receiving, via a gaming device, a wager for initiating a game play of a game, wherein the game play comprises a predetermined amount of time during which consecutive rounds of the game are to be played;

(b)   in response to the wager, establishing, via the gaming device, ~~and in response to the wager,~~ an initial balance of winnings which can be won by a player for said game play, wherein the initial balance of winnings is greater than the amount of the wager;

(c)   prior to displaying any outcome for any round of the game of said game play, displaying said initial balance of winnings which can be won by the player for said game play;

determining, via the gaming device, a number of outcomes during the predetermined amount of time, each of the outcomes corresponding to a respective round of the game;

(d)   displaying the determined outcome for each of said number of outcomes;

(e)   adjusting, via the gaming device, the initial balance of winnings based on at least one of the determined outcomes, thereby determining a current balance of winnings, wherein at least one of the outcomes causes the current balance of winnings to be less than the initial balance of winnings;

(f)   when the predetermined amount of time ends, determining, via the gaming device, ~~and at the end of the predetermined amount of time,~~ a final balance of winnings; and

(g)   providing, ~~via the gaming device,~~ the final balance of winnings to ~~a~~ the player ~~who initiated the game play~~;

wherein the game play further comprises a minimum rate of play for the predetermined amount of time, such that the player must initiate rounds of the game at the minimum rate of play in order to qualify for the final balance of winnings;

wherein the player is unable to cash out the final balance of winnings until ~~after~~ the predetermined amount of time ends; and

wherein at least one of the determined outcomes comprises an outcome that grants a privilege to the player; wherein the, said privilege comprises comprising at least one of:

(i)   permission to avoid an effect of an outcome of the determined outcomes;

(ii)   a reduction in the predetermined amount of time; and

(iii)   an increase in the final balance of winnings.